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Contribution à l'étude de l'Écriture en miroir, par A. LAPRADE. Ollier, Paris, 1905. pp. 58.

If, as has been claimed, mirror writing is the normal chirography of left-handed persons, the subject is closely allied to the dual functions of the brain. The most famous mirror writer in history was Leonardo da Vinci, but this was acquired, as, according to De Beatis, he suffered from paralysis of the right arm. Mirror writing is frequently found in idiots and imbeciles with right hemiplegia or monoplegia and it is not uncommon among left-handed school children. It has been pointed out, that if right-handed persons be asked to write with the left hand with closed eyes, the writing is normal and from left to right and not of the mirror type, thus showing that our memories of letters are visual and not motor. In that writing which goes normally from right to left, as in Hebrew and modern Arabic, the letters seem naturally adapted for this direction. Laprade, in a short monograph, has renewed this interesting question and given abstracts of all the published cases, together with a personal observation, and there is appended a complete bibliography. Pathologically, mirror writing is found to occur in hemiplegia with focal disturbances of reading, writing, and speech, melancholia, hysteria and imbecility. In a case of mirror writing in an imbecile, the patient learned to write before learning to read, and there was, therefore, no means of correcting the error. In the writer's case, in a right-handed man who developed mirror writing following the forced disuse of the right hand as a consequence of a hemiplegia, there was found at autopsy a lesion of the anterior two-thirds and knee of the internal capsule with degeneration of the pyramidal tract and of the facial and hypoglossal bundles. Of course this has no genetic bearing upon the clinical findings.

A Text Book of Psychiatry, by LEONARDO BIANCHI. Authorized translation from the Italian by James H. McDonald. Balliere, Tindall and Cox, London, 1906. pp. xv+904.

Professor Bianchi's "Trattato di Psichiatria" represents the high water mark of Italian psychiatry. It will be welcomed in its English dress if for no other reason than that its system of classification represents a protest against the mental epidemic of Kraepelinism that is sweeping over America. Asylum physicians have bolted Kraepelin whole, without that mental digestion which is the result of independent thinking, and as a result they attempt to force every form of mental disease into Kraepelin's classification. It is unfortunate that Wernicke remains so little known, believing as he does, that in the present state of our knowledge of psychiatry, we are warranted in making only a symptomatological diagnosis, and that we possess but few clinical entities, *e. g.*, general paralysis, the febrile and toxic psychosis, and the insanities of defective development.

The fundamental principles of the tendencies of various classifications in psychiatry is of interest. The older alienists based their classification on the emotional tone of the patient, and thus arose the much abused terms of mania and melancholia; Kraepelin bases his work on the prognosis of the disease process alone; Wernicke, on a hypothetical cerebral localization; Ziehen, on an association psychology; Bianchi on purely etiological considerations. Personal factors, studies in organic brain affections, pathological anatomy, experiments with drugs in producing artificial mental states, association measured with instruments of precision, have all, in the training of the various exponents of psychiatric classification, been the contributing factors from which latter evolved each individual system of psychiatry. The ideal can only be arrived at by a harmonious blend-